

House File 2256 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 2256

BY HUNTER

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the automatic mailing of ballots and
2 including applicability provisions.
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 22.7, subsection 72, Code 2020, is
2 amended by striking the subsection.

3 Sec. 2. Section 39A.4, subsection 1, paragraph c,
4 subparagraphs (10) and (11), Code 2020, are amended to read as
5 follows:

6 (10) Returning a voted absentee ballot, by mail, to a ballot
7 drop box, or in person, to the commissioner's office and the
8 person returning the ballot is not the voter, the voter's
9 designee, or a special precinct election official designated
10 pursuant to section 53.22, subsection 2.

11 (11) Making a false or untrue statement reporting that
12 a voted absentee ballot was returned to the commissioner's
13 office, by mail or in person, or to a ballot drop box, by a
14 person other than the voter, the voter's designee, or a special
15 precinct election official designated pursuant to section
16 53.22, subsection 2.

17 Sec. 3. Section 48A.10A, subsection 1, Code 2020, is amended
18 to read as follows:

19 1. The state registrar shall compare lists of persons who
20 are registered to vote with the department of transportation's
21 driver's license and nonoperator's identification card files
22 and shall, on an initial basis, issue a voter identification
23 card to each active, registered voter whose name does not
24 appear in the department of transportation's files. The voter
25 identification card shall include the name of the registered
26 voter, a signature line above which the registered voter
27 shall sign the voter identification card, the registered
28 voter's identification number assigned to the voter pursuant
29 to section 47.7, subsection 2, instructions on how the voter
30 may track the status of an absentee ballot, and an additional
31 four-digit personal identification number assigned by the state
32 commissioner.

33 Sec. 4. Section 53.1, Code 2020, is amended to read as
34 follows:

35 53.1 Right to vote — ~~conditions~~ power of attorney.

1 ~~1. Any registered voter may, subject to the provisions of~~
2 ~~this chapter, vote at any election:~~

3 ~~a. When the voter expects to be absent on election day~~
4 ~~during the time the polls are open from the precinct in which~~
5 ~~the voter is a registered voter.~~

6 ~~b. When, through illness or physical disability, the voter~~
7 ~~expects to be prevented from going to the polls and voting on~~
8 ~~election day.~~

9 ~~c. When the voter expects to be unable to go to the polls~~
10 ~~and vote on election day.~~

11 2. A person who has been designated to have power of
12 attorney by a registered voter does not have authority
13 to ~~request or to~~ cast an absentee ballot on behalf of the
14 registered voter.

15 Sec. 5. Section 53.7, Code 2020, is amended to read as
16 follows:

17 **53.7 Solicitation by public employees.**

18 1. It shall be unlawful for any employee of the state or any
19 employee of a political subdivision ~~to solicit any application~~
20 ~~or request for application for an absentee ballot, or to take~~
21 an affidavit in connection with any absentee ballot while the
22 employee is on the employer's premises or otherwise in the
23 course of employment. However, any such employee may take such
24 affidavit in connection with an absentee ballot which is cast
25 by the registered voter in person in the office where such
26 employee is employed in accordance with [section 53.10](#) or [53.11](#).
27 This subsection shall not apply to any elected official.

28 2. It is unlawful for any public officer or employee,
29 or any person acting under color of a public officer or
30 employee, to knowingly require a public employee ~~to solicit an~~
31 ~~application or request an application for an absentee ballot,~~
32 ~~or to knowingly require an employee to take an affidavit or~~
33 request for an affidavit in connection with an absentee ballot
34 application.

35 Sec. 6. Section 53.8, Code 2020, is amended to read as

1 follows:

2 **53.8 Ballot mailed.**

3 1. *a.* ~~Upon receipt of an application for an absentee~~
4 ~~ballot and immediately after the absentee ballots are printed,~~
5 ~~but not~~ Not more than twenty-nine forty-five days before the
6 election, the commissioner shall mail an absentee ballot to
7 ~~the applicant within twenty-four hours~~ each registered voter,
8 except as otherwise provided in subsection 3. When the United
9 States post office is closed in observance of a federal holiday
10 and is not delivering mail on the ~~twenty-ninth~~ forty-fifth day
11 before the election, the first day to mail absentee ballots is
12 the next business day on which mail delivery is available. The
13 absentee ballot shall be sent to the registered voter by one of
14 the following methods:

15 (1) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed
16 envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit. The
17 absentee ballot and affidavit envelope shall be enclosed in
18 or with an unsealed return envelope marked postage paid which
19 bears the same serial number as the affidavit envelope. The
20 absentee ballot, affidavit envelope, and return envelope shall
21 be enclosed in a third envelope to be sent to the registered
22 voter. If the ballot cannot be folded so that all of the votes
23 cast on the ballot will be hidden, the commissioner shall also
24 enclose a secrecy envelope with the absentee ballot.

25 (2) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed
26 return envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit
27 and marked postage paid. The absentee ballot and return
28 envelope shall be enclosed in a second envelope to be sent
29 to the registered voter. If the ballot cannot be folded so
30 that all of the votes cast on the ballot will be hidden, the
31 commissioner shall also enclose a secrecy envelope with the
32 absentee ballot.

33 *b.* The affidavit shall be marked on the appropriate envelope
34 in a form prescribed by the state commissioner of elections.

35 *c.* For envelopes mailed at any election other than the

1 primary election, the commissioner shall not mark any envelope
 2 with any information related to the party affiliation of the
 3 ~~applicant~~ registered voter.

4 2. ~~a.~~ The commissioner shall enclose with the absentee
 5 ballot a statement informing the ~~applicant~~ registered
 6 voter that the sealed return envelope may be mailed to the
 7 commissioner by the registered voter or the voter's designee,
 8 may be returned to a drop box established by the commissioner
 9 pursuant to section 53.17, subsection 1, by the registered
 10 voter or the voter's designee, or may be personally delivered
 11 to the commissioner's office by the registered voter or the
 12 voter's designee. The statement shall also inform the voter
 13 that the voter may request that the voter's designee complete a
 14 receipt when retrieving the ballot from the voter and that the
 15 status of the absentee ballot may be checked on the internet
 16 site of the secretary of state. A blank receipt shall be
 17 enclosed with the absentee ballot.

18 ~~b. If an application is received so late that it is unlikely~~
 19 ~~that the absentee ballot can be returned in time to be counted~~
 20 ~~on election day, the commissioner shall enclose with the~~
 21 ~~absentee ballot a statement to that effect.~~

22 3. ~~a.~~ When an ~~application for an~~ absentee ballot is
 23 ~~received~~ mailed by the commissioner of any county ~~from~~ to a
 24 registered voter who is a patient in a hospital in that county,
 25 a tenant of an assisted living program in that county as shown
 26 by the list of certifications provided the commissioner under
 27 section 231C.21, or a resident of any facility in that county
 28 shown to be a health care facility by the list of licenses
 29 provided the commissioner under section 135C.29, the absentee
 30 ballot shall be delivered to the voter and returned to the
 31 commissioner in the manner prescribed by section 53.22. For
 32 purposes of this paragraph, "*assisted living program*" means a
 33 program certified pursuant to section 231C.3 that meets the
 34 standards for a dementia-specific assisted living program,
 35 as established by rule by the department of inspections and

1 appeals.

2 ~~b. (1) If the application is received more than five days~~
3 ~~before the ballots are printed and the commissioner has elected~~
4 ~~to have the ballots personally delivered during the ten-day~~
5 ~~period after the ballots are printed, the commissioner shall~~
6 ~~mail to the applicant within twenty-four hours a letter in~~
7 ~~substantially the following form:~~ The state commissioner shall
8 adopt rules regarding the delivery and return of absentee
9 ballots pursuant to this subsection.

10 ~~Your application for an absentee ballot for the election~~
11 ~~to be held on has been received. This ballot will~~
12 ~~be personally delivered to you by a bipartisan team sometime~~
13 ~~during the ten days after the ballots are printed. If you will~~
14 ~~not be at the address from which your application was sent~~
15 ~~during any or all of the ten-day period immediately following~~
16 ~~the printing of the ballots, the ballot will be personally~~
17 ~~delivered to you sometime during the fourteen days preceding~~
18 ~~the election. If you will not be at the address from which~~
19 ~~your application was sent during either of these time periods,~~
20 ~~contact this office and arrangements will be made to have your~~
21 ~~absentee ballot delivered at a time when you will be present at~~
22 ~~that address.~~

23 ~~(2) If the application is received more than fourteen~~
24 ~~calendar days before the election and the commissioner has not~~
25 ~~elected to mail absentee ballots to applicants as provided~~
26 ~~under [section 53.22, subsection 4](#), and has not elected to have~~
27 ~~the absentee ballots personally delivered during the ten-day~~
28 ~~period after the ballots are printed, the commissioner shall~~
29 ~~mail to the applicant within twenty-four hours a letter in~~
30 ~~substantially the following form:~~

31 ~~Your application for an absentee ballot for the election~~
32 ~~to be held on has been received. This ballot will~~
33 ~~be personally delivered to you by a bipartisan team sometime~~
34 ~~during the fourteen days preceding the election. If you will~~
35 ~~not be at the address from which your application was sent~~

1 ~~during any or all of the fourteen-day period immediately~~
2 ~~preceding the election, contact this office and arrangements~~
3 ~~will be made to have your absentee ballot delivered at a time~~
4 ~~when you will be present at that address.~~

5 c. Nothing in [this subsection](#) nor in [section 53.22](#)
6 shall be construed to prohibit a registered voter who is a
7 hospital patient or resident of a health care facility, or who
8 anticipates entering a hospital or health care facility before
9 the date of a forthcoming election, from casting an absentee
10 ballot in the manner prescribed by [section 53.10](#) or [53.11](#).

11 Sec. 7. Section 53.10, subsection 2, Code 2020, is amended
12 to read as follows:

13 2. ~~a.~~ Each person who wishes to vote by absentee ballot
14 at the commissioner's office shall first sign an application
15 for a ballot including the ~~following information: name,~~
16 ~~current address, voter verification number, and the election~~
17 ~~for which the ballot is requested.~~ The person may report a
18 change of address or other information on the person's voter
19 registration record at that time. The registered voter shall
20 immediately mark the ballot; enclose the ballot in a secrecy
21 envelope, if necessary, and seal it in the envelope marked
22 with the affidavit; subscribe to the affidavit on the reverse
23 side of the envelope; and return the absentee ballot to the
24 commissioner. The commissioner shall record the numbers
25 appearing on the application and affidavit envelope along with
26 the name of the registered voter.

27 ~~b.~~ For purposes of [this subsection](#), ~~"voter verification~~
28 ~~number"~~ means the registered voter's driver's license number
29 ~~or nonoperator's identification card number assigned to the~~
30 ~~voter by the department of transportation or the registered~~
31 ~~voter's identification number assigned to the voter by the~~
32 ~~state commissioner pursuant to~~ [section 47.7, subsection 2.](#)

33 Sec. 8. Section 53.12, Code 2020, is amended to read as
34 follows:

35 **53.12 Duty of commissioner.**

1 The commissioner shall enclose the absentee ballot in
2 an unsealed envelope, to be furnished by the commissioner,
3 which envelope shall bear upon its face the words "county
4 commissioner of elections", the address of the commissioner's
5 office, and ~~the same a serial number appearing on the unsealed~~
6 ~~envelope shall be affixed to the application.~~

7 Sec. 9. Section 53.17, subsection 1, Code 2020, is amended
8 by adding the following new paragraph:

9 NEW PARAGRAPH. *c.* The sealed return envelope may be
10 delivered by the registered voter, by the voter's designee, or
11 by the special precinct election officials designated pursuant
12 to section 53.22, subsection 2, to a drop box established by
13 the commissioner no later than 9:00 p.m. on election day.
14 However, if delivered by the voter's designee, the envelope
15 shall be delivered within seventy-two hours of retrieving it
16 from the voter or before the closing of the polls on election
17 day, whichever is earlier. The state commissioner shall adopt
18 rules regarding the security of drop boxes. This paragraph
19 does not require a commissioner to establish a drop box.

20 Sec. 10. Section 53.17, subsection 4, paragraph f, Code
21 2020, is amended to read as follows:

22 *f.* A statement that the completed absentee ballot will be
23 delivered to the commissioner's office or a drop box within
24 seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the voter or before the
25 closing of the polls on election day, whichever is earlier,
26 or that the completed absentee ballot will be mailed to the
27 commissioner within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from
28 the voter or within time to be postmarked or, if applicable,
29 to have the intelligent mail barcode traced to a date of entry
30 into the federal mail system not later than the day before the
31 election, whichever is earlier.

32 Sec. 11. Section 53.18, subsections 1 and 3, Code 2020, are
33 amended to read as follows:

34 1. When the return envelope containing the completed
35 absentee ballot is received by the commissioner, the

1 commissioner shall at once electronically record receipt of
2 such ballot. Absentee ballots shall be stored in a secure
3 place until they are delivered to the absentee and special
4 voters precinct board.

5 3. If the affidavit envelope or the return envelope marked
6 with the affidavit contains a defect that would cause the
7 absentee ballot to be rejected by the absentee and special
8 voters precinct board, the commissioner shall immediately
9 notify the voter of that fact and that the voter's absentee
10 ballot shall not be counted unless the voter requests and
11 returns a replacement ballot in the time permitted under
12 section 53.17, subsection 2. For the purposes of [this section](#),
13 a return envelope marked with the affidavit shall be considered
14 to contain a defect if it appears to the commissioner that
15 the signature on the envelope has been signed by someone
16 other than the registered voter, in comparing the signature
17 on the envelope to the signature on record of the registered
18 voter named on the envelope. A signature or marking made
19 in accordance with [section 39.3, subsection 17](#), shall not
20 be considered a defect for purposes of [this section](#). The
21 voter may request a replacement ballot in person, in writing,
22 or over the telephone. The same serial number that was
23 assigned to the records of the original absentee ballot
24 ~~application~~ shall be used on the envelope and records of the
25 replacement ballot. The envelope marked with the affidavit and
26 containing the completed replacement ballot shall be marked
27 "Replacement ballot". The envelope marked with the affidavit
28 and containing the original ballot shall be marked "Defective"
29 and the replacement ballot shall be attached to such envelope
30 containing the original ballot and shall be stored in a secure
31 place until they are delivered to the absentee and special
32 voters precinct board, notwithstanding [sections 53.26](#) and
33 [53.27](#).

34 Sec. 12. Section 53.19, subsection 1, Code 2020, is amended
35 to read as follows:

1 1. The commissioner shall maintain a list of the absentee
2 ballots provided to registered voters, the serial number
3 appearing on the unsealed envelope, ~~the date the application~~
4 ~~for the absentee ballot was received,~~ and the date the absentee
5 ballot was sent to the registered voter ~~requesting the absentee~~
6 ~~ballot.~~

7 Sec. 13. Section 53.19, subsection 3, paragraph b, Code
8 2020, is amended to read as follows:

9 b. A registered voter who ~~has requested an absentee ballot~~
10 ~~by mail but~~ for any reason has not received it an absentee
11 ballot by mail or who has not brought the ballot to the polls
12 may appear at the voter's precinct polling place on election
13 day and, after the precinct election officials confirm the
14 commissioner has not received the voter's absentee ballot, the
15 voter shall be permitted to vote in person at the polls. If
16 the precinct election officials are unable to confirm whether
17 the commissioner has received the voter's absentee ballot, the
18 voter shall cast a ballot in accordance with [section 49.81](#).

19 Sec. 14. Section 53.21, subsection 1, Code 2020, is amended
20 to read as follows:

21 1. A voter ~~who has requested an absentee ballot~~ may obtain
22 a replacement absentee ballot if the voter declares that the
23 original ballot was lost or did not arrive. The commissioner
24 upon receipt of a written or oral request for a replacement
25 ballot shall provide a duplicate ballot. The same serial
26 number that was assigned to the records of the original
27 absentee ballot ~~request~~ shall be used on the envelopes and
28 records of the replacement ballot.

29 Sec. 15. Section 53.21, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code
30 2020, is amended to read as follows:

31 a. The commissioner shall include with the replacement
32 ballot two copies of a statement in substantially the following
33 form:

34 The My absentee ballot ~~which I requested on~~ (date)
35 has been lost or was never received. If I find this absentee

1 ballot I will return it, unvoted, to the commissioner.

2

3 (Signature of voter)

4

5 (Date)

6 Sec. 16. Section 53.22, subsection 2, paragraph a,
7 subparagraph (1), Code 2020, is amended to read as follows:

8 (1) A registered voter ~~who has applied for an absentee~~
9 ~~ballot, in a manner other than that prescribed by section 53.10~~
10 ~~or 53.11,~~ and who is a resident, tenant, or patient in a health
11 care facility, assisted living program, or hospital ~~located in~~
12 ~~the county to which the application has been submitted~~ shall
13 be delivered the appropriate absentee ballot by two special
14 precinct election officers, one of whom shall be a member of
15 each of the political parties referred to in [section 49.13](#), who
16 shall be appointed by the commissioner from the election board
17 panel for the special precinct established by [section 53.20](#).
18 The special precinct election officers shall be sworn in the
19 manner provided by [section 49.75](#) for election board members,
20 shall receive compensation as provided in [section 49.20](#),
21 and shall perform their duties during the ten calendar days
22 after the ballots are printed if the commissioner so elects,
23 during the fourteen calendar days preceding the election, and
24 on election day if all ballots requested under section 53.8,
25 subsection 3, have not previously been delivered and returned.

26 Sec. 17. Section 53.22, subsection 2, paragraphs b and c,
27 Code 2020, are amended to read as follows:

28 *b.* ~~If an applicant under~~ a registered voter subject to this
29 subsection notifies the commissioner that the ~~applicant~~ voter
30 will not be available at the health care facility, assisted
31 living program, or hospital address at any time during the
32 ten-day period after the ballots are printed, if applicable,
33 or during the fourteen-day period immediately prior to the
34 election, but will be available there at some other time prior
35 to the election or on election day, the commissioner shall

1 direct the two special precinct election officers to deliver
 2 the applicant's ballot at an appropriate time preceding the
 3 election or on election day. If a ~~person who so requested an~~
 4 ~~absentee ballot~~ voter has been dismissed from the health care
 5 facility or hospital, or is no longer a tenant of the assisted
 6 living program, the special precinct election officers may take
 7 the ballot to the voter if the voter is currently residing in
 8 the county.

9 c. The special precinct election officers shall travel
 10 together in the same vehicle and both shall be present when
 11 ~~an applicant~~ a voter casts an absentee ballot. If either
 12 or both of the special precinct election officers fail to
 13 appear at the time the duties set forth in this section are
 14 to be performed, the commissioner shall at once appoint some
 15 other person, giving preference to persons designated by
 16 the respective county chairpersons of the political parties
 17 described in section 49.13, to carry out the requirements of
 18 this section. The persons authorized by this subsection to
 19 deliver an absentee ballot to ~~an applicant~~ a voter, and, if
 20 requested, may assist the ~~applicant~~ voter in filling out the
 21 ballot as permitted by section 49.90. After the voter has
 22 securely sealed the marked ballot in the envelope provided and
 23 has subscribed to the oath, the voted absentee ballots shall
 24 be deposited in a sealed container which shall be returned to
 25 the commissioner on the same day the ballots are voted. On
 26 election day the officers shall return the sealed container by
 27 the time the polls are closed.

28 Sec. 18. Section 53.22, subsections 3, 4, and 5, Code 2020,
 29 are amended to read as follows:

30 3. Any registered voter who becomes a patient, tenant, or
 31 resident of a hospital, assisted living program, or health
 32 care facility in the county where the voter is registered to
 33 vote within three days prior to the date of any election or on
 34 election day may request an absentee ballot during that period
 35 or on election day. ~~As an alternative to the application~~

1 ~~procedure prescribed by section 53.2,~~ the The registered
 2 voter may make the request directly to the officers who are
 3 delivering and returning absentee ballots under this section.
 4 Alternatively, the request may be made by telephone to the
 5 office of the commissioner not later than four hours before
 6 the close of the polls. If the requester is found to be a
 7 registered voter of that county, these officers shall deliver
 8 the appropriate absentee ballot to the registered voter in the
 9 manner prescribed by this section.

10 4. For any election except a primary or general election
 11 or a special election to fill a vacancy under section 69.14,
 12 the commissioner may, as an alternative to subsection 2, mail
 13 an absentee ballot to ~~an applicant~~ a registered voter under
 14 this section to be voted and returned to the commissioner in
 15 accordance with this chapter. This subsection only applies
 16 to ~~applications for~~ absentee ballots ~~from~~ for a single health
 17 care facility, assisted living program, or hospital if there
 18 are no more than two applications from that facility, program,
 19 or hospital.

20 5. The commissioner shall mail an absentee ballot to a
 21 registered voter ~~who has applied for an absentee ballot and~~
 22 who is a patient, tenant, or resident of a hospital, assisted
 23 living program, or health care facility outside the county in
 24 which the voter is registered to vote.

25 Sec. 19. Section 53.23, subsection 3, paragraph c, Code
 26 2020, is amended to read as follows:

27 c. For the general election, the commissioner ~~may~~ shall
 28 convene the special precinct election board ~~on the day before~~
 29 ~~the election on November 1~~ to begin counting absentee ballots.
 30 ~~However, if in the preceding general election the counting of~~
 31 ~~absentee ballots was not completed by 10:00 p.m. on election~~
 32 ~~day, the commissioner shall convene the special precinct~~
 33 ~~election board on the day before the next general election to~~
 34 ~~begin counting absentee ballots.~~ The board shall not release
 35 the results of its tabulation pursuant to this paragraph until

1 the count is completed on election day.

2 Sec. 20. Section 53.23, subsection 4, Code 2020, is amended
3 to read as follows:

4 4. The room where members of the special precinct election
5 board are engaged in counting absentee ballots ~~on the day~~
6 ~~before the election pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph "c",~~
7 ~~or during the hours the polls are open~~ shall be policed so
8 as to prevent any person other than those whose presence is
9 authorized by **this subsection** from obtaining information
10 about the progress of the count. The only persons who may
11 be admitted to that room are the members of the board, five
12 challengers representing each political party, one observer
13 representing any nonparty political organization or any
14 candidate nominated by petition pursuant to **chapter 45** or
15 any other nonpartisan candidate in a city or school election
16 appearing on the ballot of the election in progress, one
17 observer representing persons supporting a public measure
18 appearing on the ballot and one observer representing
19 persons opposed to such measure, and the commissioner or the
20 commissioner's designee. It shall be unlawful for any of these
21 persons to communicate or attempt to communicate, directly or
22 indirectly, information regarding the progress of the count at
23 any time while the board is convened pursuant to **subsection 3,**
24 paragraph "c", or at any time before the polls are closed.

25 Sec. 21. Section 53.39, subsection 1, Code 2020, is amended
26 to read as follows:

27 1. ~~Section 53.2~~ does not apply in the case of a qualified
28 voter of the state of Iowa serving in the armed forces of the
29 United States. In any such case an application for ballot as
30 provided for in that section is not required and an An absent
31 voter's ballot shall be sent or made available to any such
32 a qualified voter of the state of Iowa serving in the armed
33 forces of the United States upon a request as provided in this
34 subchapter.

35 Sec. 22. Section 53.45, subsection 4, Code 2020, is amended

1 to read as follows:

2 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of [section 53.49](#),
3 an eligible elector who requests a special absentee ballot
4 under [this section](#) may also make application for an ~~absentee~~
5 ~~ballot under [section 53.2](#)~~ or an armed forces absentee ballot
6 under [section 53.40](#). If the regular absentee or armed forces
7 absentee ballot is properly voted and returned, the special
8 absentee ballot is void and the commissioner shall reject it in
9 whole when special absentee ballots are canvassed.

10 Sec. 23. Section 53.49, Code 2020, is amended to read as
11 follows:

12 **53.49 Applicable to armed forces and other citizens.**

13 The provisions of [this subchapter](#) as to absent voting shall
14 apply only to absent voters in the armed forces of the United
15 States as defined for the purpose of absentee voting in section
16 53.37. The provisions of section 53.1 and sections ~~53.1~~ 53.4
17 through 53.34 shall apply to all other voters not members of
18 the armed forces of the United States.

19 Sec. 24. REPEAL. Sections 53.2 and 53.3, Code 2020, are
20 repealed.

21 Sec. 25. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT. Section 25B.2, subsection
22 3, shall not apply to this Act.

23 Sec. 26. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to all elections
24 taking place on or after July 1, 2021.

25 EXPLANATION

26 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
27 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

28 This bill relates to the mailing of absentee ballots.
29 The bill requires county commissioners of elections to
30 automatically mail absentee ballots to all registered voters
31 45 days before an election and to electronically confirm the
32 receipt of returned absentee ballots. Current law requires
33 registered voters to submit an application prior to receiving
34 an absentee ballot, and provides that commissioners mail
35 absentee ballots not earlier than 29 days before the election.

1 The bill also allows county commissioners to establish drop
2 boxes at which voters or voters' designees may deposit absentee
3 ballots. The special precinct election board must convene
4 starting on November 1 to begin counting ballots. The bill
5 requires the state commissioner of elections to adopt rules
6 regarding security measures for absentee ballot drop boxes.
7 The bill requires voter registration cards and absentee
8 ballots to include instructions on how absentee ballots may be
9 tracked by the voter. The bill may include a state mandate as
10 defined in Code section 25B.3. The bill makes inapplicable
11 Code section 25B.2, subsection 3, which would relieve a
12 political subdivision from complying with a state mandate if
13 funding for the cost of the state mandate is not provided or
14 specified. Therefore, political subdivisions are required to
15 comply with any state mandate included in the bill.